

March 13, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a mother of three girls, ages 2, 6, and 8. Two of them are Sandy Hook School students – one in first grade, one in third grade. I would like to share with you our experience with Dec 14th and my feelings on gun control.

My **third** grader has gone thru some deep grief over the loss of her friends' siblings. She was devastated by the loss of the teachers, especially her principle, Dawn Hochsprung, whom we all loved. She is angry that this has happened, that lives were lost so tragically, and that she can no longer go to her school. When she was evacuated that day to the fire house, she did not know if her little sister had survived. She struggles with the concept that there is evil in the world, that something this horrific could happen to this town, to her, to her sisters, to her friends. She is 8.

In addition to the tragic loss of her playmates, friends, and teachers, my **first** grader suffers from PTSD. She was in the first room by the entrance at the school. Her teacher was able to gather the children into the tiny bathroom inside the classroom. There she stood, with 14 of her classmates and her teacher, all of them crying. You see, she heard what was happening on the other side of the wall. She heard everything. Shooting. Screaming. Pleading. She was sure she was going to die that day, and did not want to die for Christmas. With PTSD comes fear – all kinds of fear. Each time she hears a loud or unfamiliar noise, she experiences the fear she had in that bathroom. And she is not alone. Nightmares, difficulty falling asleep, afraid to go anywhere in her own house. At school she becomes withdrawn, crying daily, covering her ears when it gets too loud and waiting for this to happen again. She is 6.

Imagine being this age and living like this. My children face their fears everyday by getting on the bus and going to school. Would you be able to do the same?

Although we are getting help and trying to heal, this will be affect us the rest of our lives. We are thankful that by the grace of God, our children came home with us on Dec 14. As a family and as a community, we are deeply saddened and heartbroken at the loss of so many innocent children and beloved teachers.

We are also furious.

Furious that 26 families must suffer with grief so deep and so wide that it is unimaginable.

Furious that the innocence and safety of my children's lives has been taken.

Furious that someone had access to the type of weapon used in this massacre.

Furious that this type of weapon is even legal.

Furious that gun makers make ammution with such high rounds and our government does nothing to stop them.

Furious that the ban on assault weapons was carelessly left to expire.

Furious that lawmakers let the gun lobbyists have so much control.
Furious that somehow, someone's right to own a gun is more important than my children's rights to life.
Furious that common sense has gone out the window.
Furious that lawmakers are too scared to take a stand.

The "what ifs" never stop going through my mind. What if this weapon were still banned? What if there weren't high capacity rounds? What if the shooter had different bullets? I think the carnage would have been a lot less. Yes, there would be losses. But there would have been time. Time to react and possibly make a difference.

Those children and teachers had NO CHANCE. They did not just get shot. They got blown apart.

I don't believe that anyone, other than the military, has a right to the type of weapon or ammo used at Sandy Hook. **The second amendment is not limitless.**

We are trying to move forward, but there must be change. If our lawmakers cannot make this change, then we, as a people, will elect those who will.

I insist that our lawmakers put into place the following:

- Universal, federal level background checks – no loopholes;
- Ban ALL assault weapons like the one used at Sandy Hook;
- Ban high capacity magazines and armor piercing bullets;
- Address mental health issues

There MUST NOT be another Sandy Hook. You have a responsibility and an obligation to act now and change the laws.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Carrie Battaglia
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Sandy Hook